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Subpart A—Preliminary Matters

§ 531.1 Definitions.

(a) *Administrator* means the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division or his authorized representative. The Secretary of Labor has delegated to the

Administrator the functions vested in him under section 3(m) of the Act.

(b) *Act* means the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended.

§ 531.2 Purpose and scope.

(a) Section 3(m) of the Act defines the term “wage” to include the “reasonable cost”, as determined by the Secretary of Labor, to an employer of furnishing any employee with board, lodging, or other facilities, if such board, lodging, or other facilities are customarily furnished by the employer to his employees. In addition, section 3(m) gives the Secretary authority to determine the “fair value.” of such facilities on the basis of average cost to the employer or to groups of employers similarly situated, on average value to groups of employees, or other appropriate measures of “fair value.” Whenever so determined and when applicable and pertinent, the “fair value” of the facilities involved shall be includable as part of “wages” instead of the actual measure of the costs of those facilities. The section provides, however, that the cost of board, lodging, or other facilities shall not be included as part of “wages” if excluded therefrom by a bona fide collective bargaining agreement. Section 3(m) also provides a method for determining the wage of a tipped employee.

(b) This part 531 contains any determinations made as to the “reasonable cost” and “fair value” of board, lodging, or other facilities having general application, and describes the procedure whereby determinations having general or particular application may be made. The part also interprets generally the provisions of section 3(m) of the Act, including the term “tipped employee” as defined in section 3(t).

Subpart B—Determinations of “Reasonable Cost” and “Fair Value”; Effects of Collective Bargaining Agreements

§ 531.3 General determinations of “reasonable cost.”

(a) The term *reasonable cost* as used in section 3(m) of the Act is hereby determined to be not more than the actual

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cost to the employer of the board, lodging, or other facilities customarily furnished by him to his employees.

(b) *Reasonable cost* does not include a profit to the employer or to any affiliated person.

(c) Except whenever any determination made under § 531.4 is applicable, the “reasonable cost” to the employer of furnishing the employee with board, lodging, or other facilities (including housing) is the cost of operation and maintenance including adequate depreciation plus a reasonable allowance (not more than 5 1/2 percent) for interest on the depreciated amount of capital invested by the employer: *Provided*, That if the total so computed is more than the fair rental value (or the fair price of the commodities or facilities offered for sale), the fair rental value (or the fair price of the commodities or facilities offered for sale) shall be the reasonable cost. The cost of operation and maintenance, the rate of depreciation, and the depreciated amount of capital invested by the employer shall be those arrived at under good accounting practices. As used in this paragraph, the term “good accounting practices” does not include accounting practices which have been rejected by the Internal Revenue Service for tax purposes, and the term “depreciation” includes obsolescence.

(d)(1) The cost of furnishing “facilities” found by the Administrator to be primarily for the benefit or convenience of the employer will not be recognized as reasonable and may not therefore be included in computing wages.

(2) The following is a list of facilities found by the Administrator to be primarily for the benefit of convenience of the employer. The list is intended to be illustrative rather than exclusive: (i) Tools of the trade and other materials and services incidental to carrying on the employer’s business; (ii) the cost of any construction by and for the employer; (iii) the cost of uniforms and of their laundering, where the nature of the business requires the employee to wear a uniform.

§ 531.4 Making determinations of “reasonable cost.”

(a) *Procedure*. Upon his own motion or upon the petition of any interested

person, the Administrator may determine generally or particularly the “reasonable cost” to an employer of furnishing any employee with board, lodging, or other facilities, if such board, lodging, or other facilities are customarily furnished by the employer to his employees. Notice of proposed determination shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, and interested persons shall be afforded an opportunity to participate through submission of written data, views, or arguments. Such notice shall indicate whether or not an opportunity will be afforded to make oral presentations. Whenever the latter opportunity is afforded, the notice shall specify the time and place of any hearing and the rules governing such proceedings. Consideration shall be given to all relevant matter presented in the adoption of any rule.

(b) *Contents of petitions submitted by interested persons*. Any petition by an employee or an authorized representative of employees, an employer or group of employers, or other interested persons for a determination of “reasonable cost” shall include the following information:

(1) The name and location of the employer’s or employers’ place or places of business;

(2) A detailed description of the board, lodging, or other facilities furnished by the employer or employers, whether or not these facilities are customarily furnished by the employer or employers, and whether or not they are alleged to constitute “wages”;

(3) The charges or deductions made for the facility or facilities by the employer or employers;

(4) When the actual cost of the facility or facilities is known an itemized statement of such cost to the employer or employers of the furnished facility or facilities;

(5) The cash wages paid;

(6) The reason or reasons for which the determination is requested, including any reason or reasons why the determinations in § 531.3 should not apply; and

(7) Whether an opportunity to make an oral presentation is requested; and if it is requested, the inclusion of a summary of any expected presentation.